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ABSTRACT

Situated on the Sierra Madre's western slope is Zacapoaxtla, one of the 222 municipios in the State of Puebla, Mexico. From prehispanic times, Zacapoaxtla has been a "region de refugio" where groups of American Indians cluster, isolate themselves from the rest of the world, and maintain their cultural traditions insofar as the national economic and political organization permits. To the south of Zacapoaxtla is the village of Xalacapan, the largest and oldest village of the entire municipio. Nahuat is still the most prevalent Indian language spoken. Yet, during the last decade, there has been a considerable reduction in the number of monolinguals in Indian languages and an increase of bilinguals in an Indian language and Spanish. The rural schools in the State of Puebla have a long history of interventions by civil and religious authorities concerned with the education of the Indians. From the revolution in the second decade of the 20th century, through the years of Cardenas' socialist regime, to the enthusiastic literacy campaigns of the 1940's there have been dramatic changes in the village life and in the school. This ethnographic study describes the rural school in the Nahuat village of Xalacapan in Zacapoaxtla. The school's history from 1893 through 1973 is discussed. (NQ)

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XALACAPAN: VILLAGE AND SCHOOL IN ZACAPOAXTLA, PUEBLA

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University of Illinois, Urbana

The rural schools in the State of Puebla, Mexico, have a long history of interventions by civil and religious authorities concerned with the education of the Indians. From the sad years of the Revolution in the second decade of this century, through the years of the socialist regime of Cardenas, to the enthusiastic literacy campaigns of the 1940s there are dramatic changes in the village life and in the school. This ethnographic study aims at describing a rural school in the context of Nahuat village in the Sierra of Zacapoaxtla.

I. Zacapoaxtla

Of the 222 municipios that make up Puebla State, 63 form the Sierra Norte region. Zacapoaxtla, the municipio figuring in this study, numbered 26,134 inhabitants in 1970 placing it thirteenth in the state for population. The name, Zacapoaxtla comes from tsacatl, which means grass, poa,meaning to count, and ixtla, that is, plains--plains where tribute grass is counted (Franco 1946: 371). (See Map 1, next page.) Zacapoaxtla is called the gateway of the sierra because, situated as it is on the western slope of the Sierra Madre, one must pass through it in order to enter the northern municipios. It is bounded on the north by Cuetzalan and Mauzontla, on the east by Tlautlauqui, on the south by Zaragoza and San Juan, on the southwest by Zautla, and finally on the west by Xochiapulco. The municipios of Nauzontla, Xochitlan, Cuetzalan, and Zacapoaxtla were formerly one district. From the point of view of the Indians, Zacapoaxtla is the entrance to the national economic and political life. To the southeast, 18 km. of winding, paved road connect Zacapoaxtla with the Zacatepec-Teziutlan highway, and 55 km. further south, with the Mexico-Jalapa highway. The 30 km. of road winding north out of Zacapoaxtla end in Cuetzalan del Progreso. Railraod communications are not very far from the city of Zacapoaxtla. The Puebla Teziutlan train stops at Zaragoza, and the Interoceanico which connects Mexico City with Veracruz (via Jalapa) passes through Oriental, about 60 km. from Zacapoaxtla. Most of the transportation to and from the municipio, as well as that within it is by truck, bus and car where road conditions permit. Except in a few instances, the dirt roads connecting villages with Zacapoaxtla City are infrequently used by automotive vehicles.

Because of its geographical location at the entrance to the sierra, and its topography and climate, Zacapoaxtla has been from prehispanic times a region de

* The author wishes to thank the Department of Anthropology of the University of Pittsburgh which was highly instrumental in my obtaining an NDEA grant for the summer of 1965 and an Andrew Mellon Fellowship from 1966 to 1969. This study was conducted in the summers of 1965, from July 1968 to April 1969, and in the summers of 1972, 1973 and 1974. The constructive criticisms of various members of the Culture and Education Committee of the University of Illinois, Urbana are deeply appreciated.

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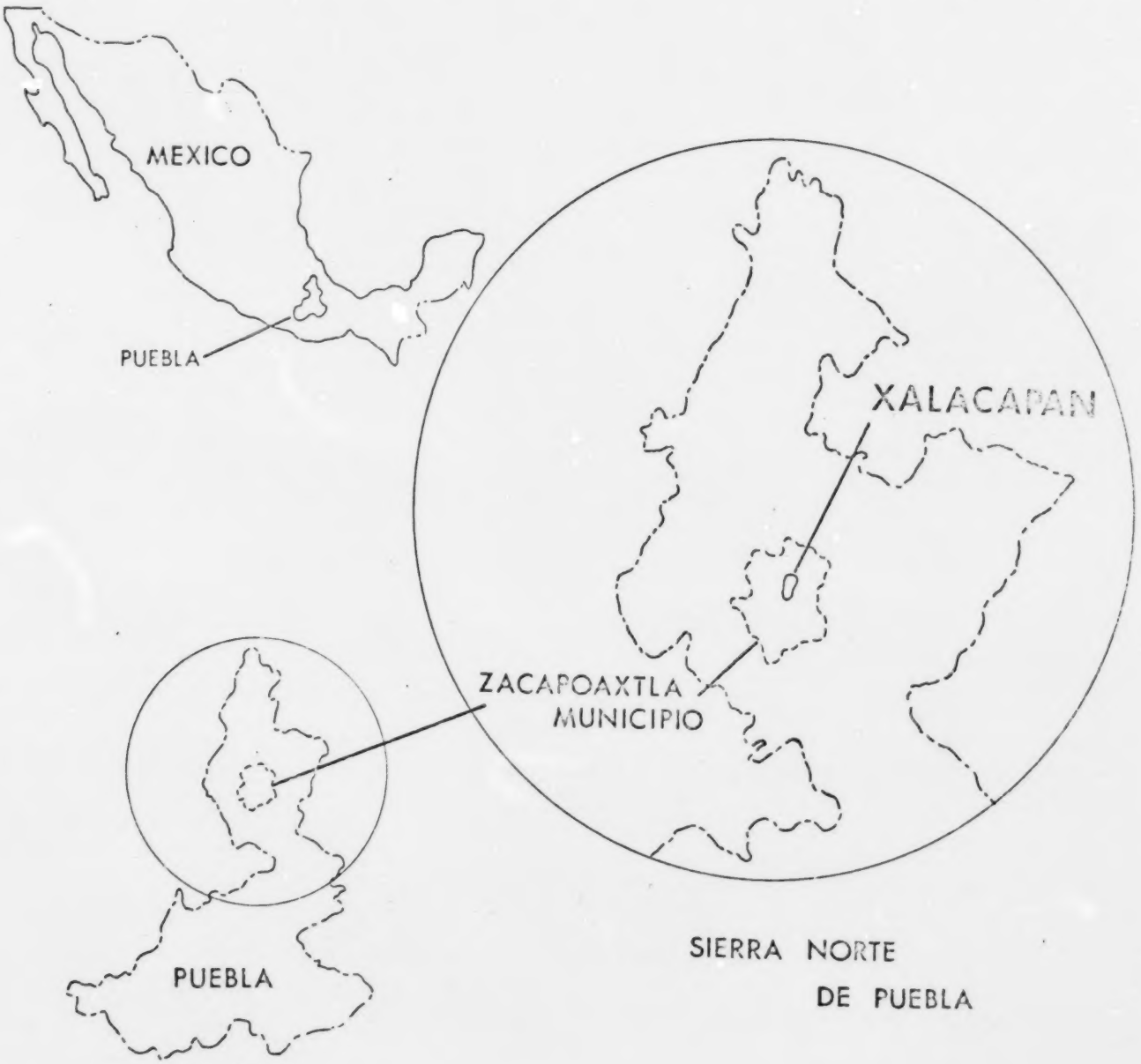

Map 1

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refugio, "region of refuge" in Aguirre Beltran's terms (1967: 11-20). The terrain is broken, crossed by numerous canyons, rivers, and rifts, and partly inaccessible. The altitudes registered in the Sierra Norte of Puebla range between 240 m. and 2,500 m. above sea level. Though the city of Zacapoaxtla is located at 1,890 m., the altitude of the municipio actually varies from 1,200 to 2,300 m.; consequently, it presents a diverse climate, flora, and fauna. Yet, within the relatively short distance of 15 kms. between Zacapoaxtla City and Tahitic, the maize cultivation of the cold and humid sierra gives way to sugar cane, coffee plantations, and the orchards (bananas, oranges, lemons) of the low lands. Regardless of local differences, however, the municipio of Zacapoaxtla tends to be cold, humid, foggy and windy. It receives some 50 inches of rain during an average year, and rather few hours of sunshine. Hence, it has been a corner of the sierra in which groups of Indians cluster, isolate themselves from the rest of the world, and maintain their cultural traditions insofar as the national economic and political organization permits. Even small communities live side by side, ignoring each other.

Zacapoaxtla stands in sharp contrast regarding its educational and economic level if compared with any metropolitan area of Mexico. According to the National Census of 1970, 42 percent of the persons ten years old and older are illiterate (twice as many females than males). From the approximately 15,200 persons of 12 years of age and older, there are only 825 that reached postprimary education, and scarce 331 with one or more years of postsecondary education (2.1 percent of the population in that age bracket). Families are still large, and the population is increasing, although not as rapidly as in other parts of the state. Zacapoaxtla has 5,428 families with an average of 4.6 persons per family. The density of population for the entire municipio in 1970 was of 138.41 persons per sq. km.,,considerably higher than that of the state.

Languages

In 1970 the number of bilinguals in Spanish and an Indian language was calculated in 12,544 (for persons of five years of age and older). Although there are some speakers of Totonac, Mixtec, Otomi, Popoloca, and Mazatec languages, most bilinguals speak Nahuat. There are as many as 2,055 who speak only Nahuat.

Cultural isolation has been the characteristic of Totonac and Nahuat monolingual populations. The Nahuat dialect of Zacapoaxtla has been classified as belonging to the Uto-Aztecan phylum. Uto-Aztecan is further divided into Aztecoidean or Mexicano, Pima and Taracahitia. One of the dialects of the Aztecoidean division (which has 21 different dialects--see Longacre 1967: 120-121) is the one spoken by some 50,000 Indians living between Cuetzalan to the north, Chignahuapan to the west, and Teziutlan to the east.

Toledano (1931-32: 17) has shown that the Otomi and Totonac groups moved westward. /Insert Map 2 about here./ They started from the Valley of Mexico and some went to Tajin, others to the north and south of Tajin. The route followed by these groups touched Zacapoaxtla and effectively displaced some Totonacs into the north of the municipio. Still more important was the later Nahuat migration in the same direction, their movement displaced the Totonac and Otomi-speaking people settled in the Sierra Norte of Puebla. Finally, Spanish groups coming from the south pushed the Nahuat further north, who in turn pushed the Totonacs toward the Gulf of Mexico. It is difficult to say what the boundaries of these linguistic groups were at the time of the 1810 Independence; however, the national census

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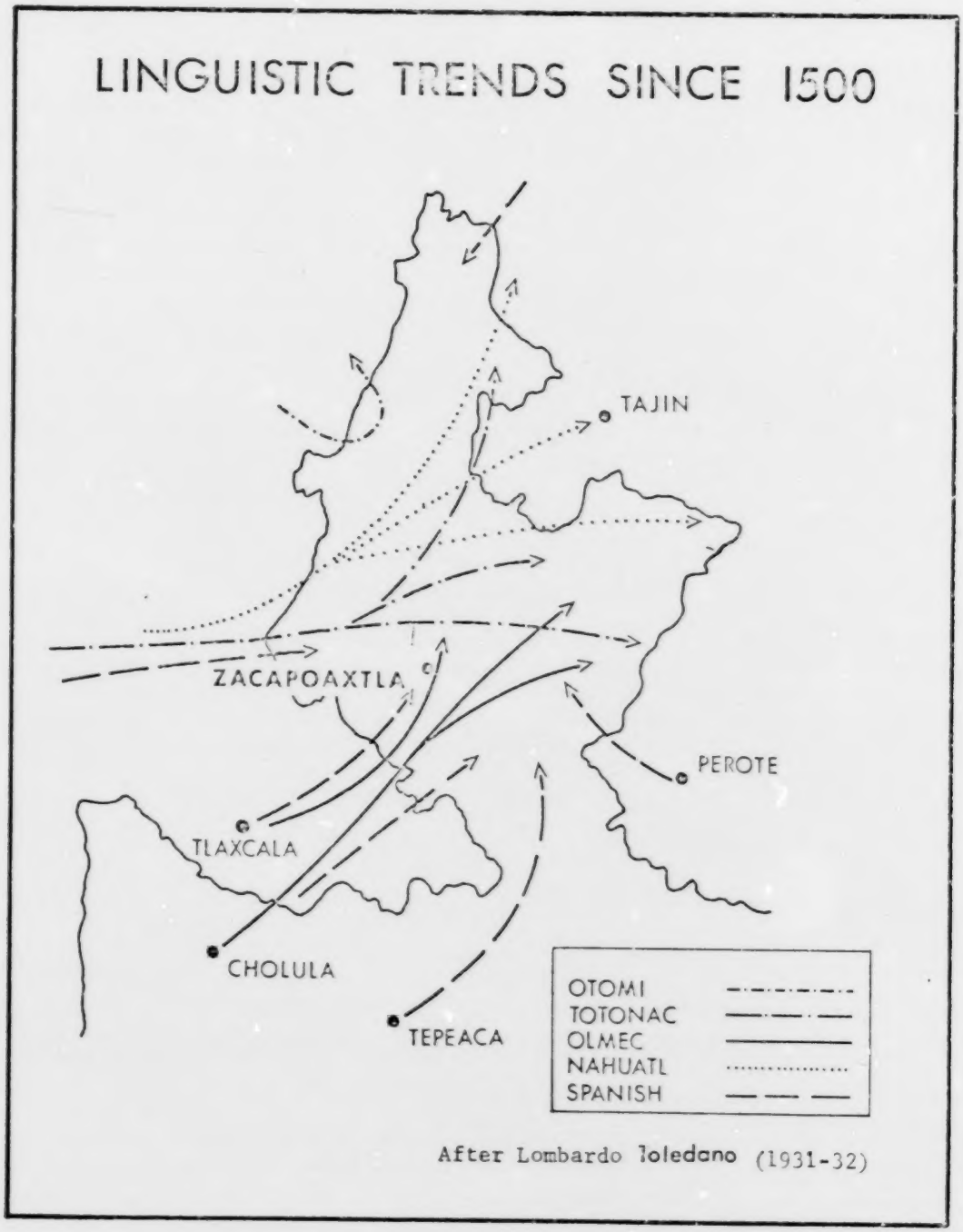

Map 2

and information obtained from the oldest inhabitants of Zacapoaxtla can help us to reconstruct a picture of the second half of that century. It is known that practically all of the municipios to the north of Zacapoaxtla had some Totonac population, which has decreased rapidly in the last hundred years.

The 63 municipios forming the Sierra Norte of Puebla 1/ have become places of hidden refuge for most monolinguals in the state. As of 1960, the total Indian population for the state, 132,621, was distributed as follows: Nahuat, 93,858; Totonac, 33,871; Otomi, 1,301. The Sierra Norte itself had a population of 545,398 for the same year, which amounts to 27.6 percent of the total state population. Of these, the speakers of Indian languages numbered 62,025 Nahuat, 32,827 Totonac, and 1,302 Otomi. Altogether, 73 percent of the total number of monolingual Indians living in the State of Puebla are located in the Sierra Norte. Nahuat is still the most prevalent Indian language spoken in Zacapoaxtla as well in the surrounding municipios. /Insert Map 3 about here/ In fact, Cuetzalan and Zacapoaxtla are the two main concentrations of Nahuat population for the entire Sierra Norte of Puebla. It is the conviction of most of the anthropologists and linguists who know the area that the figures in Tables 1, 2, and 3 are rather conservative; not included in the large number of people who use Nahuat exclusively in the home, because they know the few Spanish words necessary for trading and shopping. Though there are serious reservations regarding the accuracy and the criterion for distinguishing monolinguals from bilinguals and both from the rest of the population, it seems reasonable to accept the demonstrated pattern of distribution of the monolingual population and the general trend indicating that the monolingual population is decreasing. /Insert Table 1 and 2 about here/

The most dramatic changes in the linguistic picture of the Sierra Norte of Puebla have taken place during the last decade. On the one hand, there is a considerable reduction in the number of monolinguals in Indian languages, and on the other, there is an enormous increase of bilinguals in an Indian language and in Spanish. Those municipios with the largest Indian concentration that had in the 1940s between 50 and 90 percent monolinguals in an Indian language, today have less than 50 percent. In fact for the entire population of the eight municipios there is only 14.5 percent of monolinguals, while, on the contrary we find a 28.3 percent of bilinguals. Not only the ratios of bilinguals to monolinguals have increased, but the absolute number of bilinguals increased both for the State of Puebla, as well as for the Sierra Norte in particular.

The linguistic trends of the municipios immediately surrounding Zacapoaxtla is also revealing in two ways. It shows us the heavy concentration of monolinguals in the area, and their decreasing trends, but it also shows the different pace for each municipio. /Insert Table 3 about here/

Demographic and Economic Development of Zacapoaxtla

The population of the municipio has doubled in the last 45 years, therefore the rate of growth is below that of the state and of the country. But the population density has been consistently high, above the state average, at least since 1950. Statistical figures cannot tell us the entire story. The population pressure in the northern part of the state has been formidable, given the limited resources of land. Only 28.8 percent of the state's land is arable (although not necessarily cultivated). Nonetheless, in the Sierra Norte and the municipio of Zacapoaxtla the figure drops to 26 percent. Besides, there are additional problems. First, the economically active population of the Sierra Norte is

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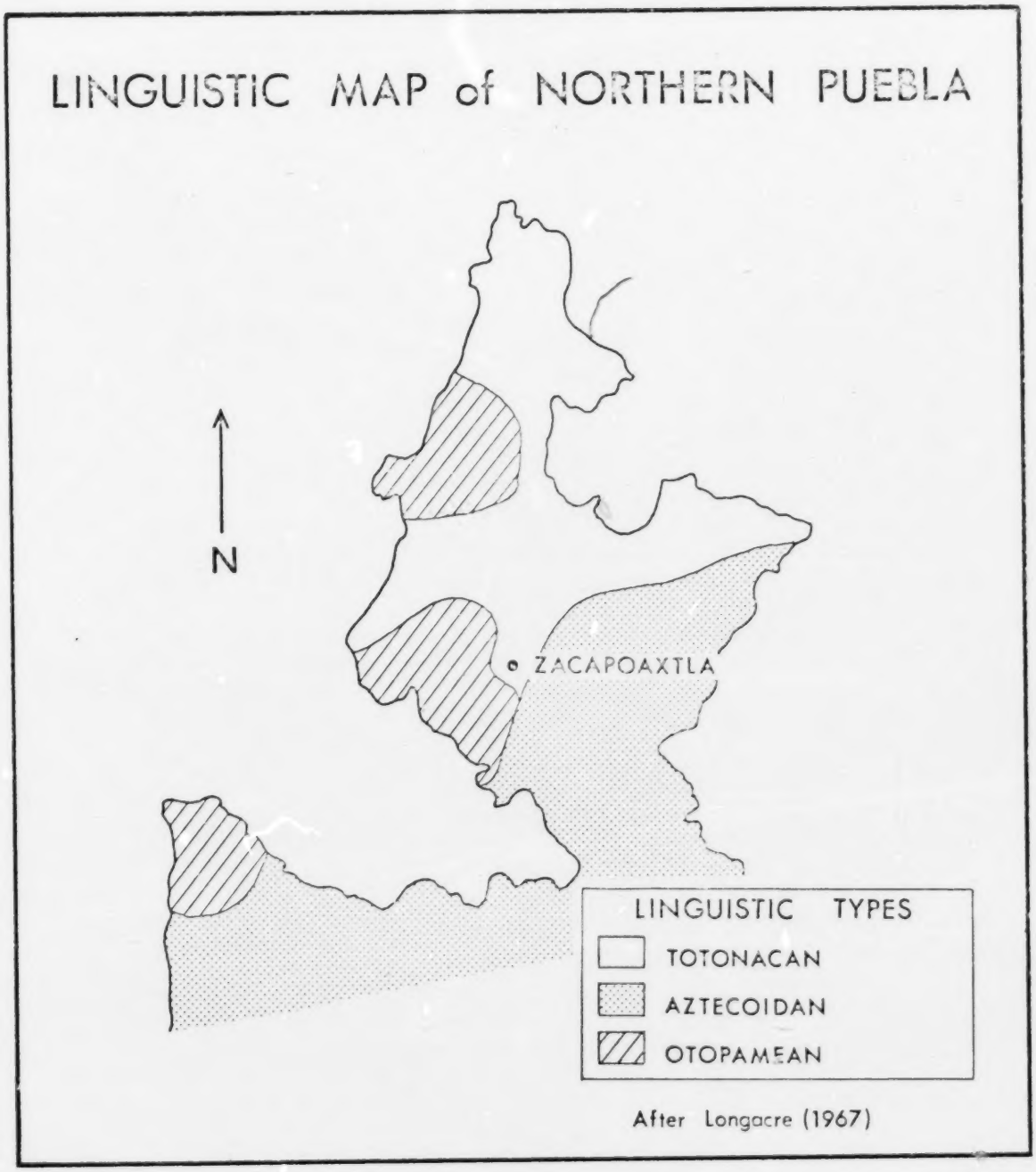

Map 3

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Table 1.--Monolinguals in an Indian Language, Five Years of Age and Older, in the Municipios with Largest Indian Concentration in the Sierra Norte of Puebla

Municipio	1940	Percent of municipal population	1950	Percent of municipal population	1960	Percent of municipal population	1970	Percent of municipal population
Ahuacatlan	4,770	87.0	5,396	83.7	5,128	70.5	3,860	46.4
Cuetzalan	8,509	46.4	7,402	46.1	6,318	33.5	5,448	21.3
Tepetzintla	3,342	85.7	4,049	90.3	4,217	89.5	2,392	34.9
Tlaola	2,294	33.2	4,256	56.4	4,196	51.2	2,401	22.1
Xochitlan	2,407	48.0	3,828	66.4	3,225	50.1	2,048	25.4
Zacapoaxtla	7,298	53.2	4,396	26.2	3,449	19.6	2,092	8.0
Zacatlan	2,750	12.4	2,609	10.3	3,222	11.7	890	2.4
Zautla	4,551	49.8	2,464	23.0	4,063	38.0	1,494	10.3
Total 8 municipios	35,921		34,400		33,818		20,625	
Total Sierra Norte	102,308		86,860		96,841		--	
Total Puebla State	163,616		118,971		132,621		94,194	

Source: VIII y IX Censos Generales de Población, 1940, 1950, 1960 y 1970. Estado de Puebla, Mexico.

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Table 2.--Bilinguals in Spanish and in an Indian Language Five Years of Age and Older, in the Municipios with Largest Concentration of Indians in the Sierra Norte of Puebla

Municipio	1940	Percent of municipal population	1950	Percent of municipal population	1960	Percent of municipal population	1970	Percent of municipal population
Ahuacatlan	100	1.8	481	7.5	910	12.6	2,397	27.7
Cuetzalan	182	1.0	2,560	16.0	3,927	20.8	5,912	23.2
Tepetzintla	461	11.8	361	8.1	418	8.9	1,520	23.2
Tlaola	2,699	39.1	2,242	29.7	2,208	26.9	4,646	42.9
Xochitlan	2,095	41.8	1,449	25.3	2,484	38.6	4,160	51.7
Zacapoaxtla	2,588	18.8	5,137	30.6	493	2.8	10,452	47.5
Zacatlan	2,375	10.7	1,535	6.1	4,181	15.1	4,470	12.1
Zautla	2,718	29.8	5,321	49.7	3,294	28.4	6,699	46.3
Total 8 municipios	13,218		19,086		17,915		40,236	
Sierra of Puebla	59,828		82,816		79,827		--	
Puebla State	159,473		178,519		160,736		251,946	

Source: VIII - IX Censos Generales de Población, 1940, 1950, 1960 and 1970. Estado de Puebla, Mexico.

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Table 3.--Monolinguals in an Indian Language Five Years of Age and Older, in Zacapoaxtla and the Municipios Immediately Surrounding Zacapoaxtla, for 1940, 1960, 1970

Municipios	1940	1960	1970
Cuetzalan	8,470	6,317	5,448
Nauzontla	317	158	73
Tlatlauqui	1,848	2,209	695
Xochiapulco	822	202	108
Zacapoaxtla	7,298	3,449	2,092
Zautla	4,548	4,063	1,494
Total	23,303	16,398	9,910

Source: VIII y IX Censos Generales de Poblacion, 1940, 1950, 1960 and 1970. Estado de Puebla, Mexico

Table 4.--Population and Population Density for Zacapoaxtla, and Population Density for the State of Puebla

	Zacapoaxtla		Puebla State
Year	Population	Population density	Population density
1930	15,651	82.8	--
1940	15,725	83.2	--
1950	19,716	100.4	--
1960	20,819	110.3	58.2
1970	26,134	138.4	73.9

Sources: Censos Generales de Poblacion, 1930-1970, Estado de Puebla, Mexico.

predominantly agricultural; in 1960 81 percent lived from agriculture, fishing, hunting, and forestry. In some municipios (Tepetzintla, for example) this percentage rises to 98 percent. In Zacapoaxtla 78 percent were agriculturalists. In 1970, the labor force was composed of 6,430 persons (only 24.6 percent of the total municipal population, as compared with 34.2 percent in 1960) and as many as 69.4 percent remain in agricultural work. Still more serious is the large number of landless "jornaleros" that work someone else's land, 2,498 (38.8 percent of the labor force). In Zacapoaxtla, 47 owners possessed 65.7 percent of the land in 1960, with a total number of 4,594 hectares, while the remaining 1,351 owners possess only 1,510 hectares, and five ejidos have a total of 884 hectares. Land Distribution remains very much the same in the 1970s. A second problem is that land is poor to an extreme. Third, of the 3,683 hectares used in Zacapoaxtla for cultivation, 2,486 are watered by seasonal rains alone, two hectares are watered by rains and subsurface moisture, and one hectare has artificial irrigation. The rest are used for fruit orchards and may have some artificial irrigation. Indeed, over 80 percent of the cultivable land of the Sierra Norte depends on seasonal rains and only five percent has artificial irrigation.

There are other census indicators which provide an impression of very slow economic development in Zacapoaxtla in the last ten years, such as the large proportion of rural versus urban dwellers, the large percentage of persons under 20 years of age and of illiterate adults, the low quality of the homes, the lack of drainage facilities, the lack of shoes (the great majority either wear huaraches or go barefoot), the lack of migrations from other states and municipios, and the predominance of the Catholic religion.

II. Xalacapan

The village of Xalacapan borders to the south on the city of Zacapoaxtla. To the north it is bounded by the mountainous municipio of Cuetzalan and by the village of Huahuaxtla. To the east Xalacapan touches two more barrios that belong to the municipio of Zacapoaxtla, Xochitepec and San Antonio. To the west and southwest it meets the barrio of Zacapexpan.

Because the center of Xalacapan is about a hundred feet lower in altitude than that of Zacapoaxtla City, and about three miles to the north of it, there

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are considerable differences in weather during the rainy season which extends from November to March. Zacapoaxtla lies on the crest of a mountain located in the middle of a large canyon formed by the Sierra Madre Oriental, and is usually surrounded by dense fog, whereas Xalacapan is warmer and rainier.

Xalacapan comes from the Nahuat xal and xalli meaning "sands," ca and calli meaning "clusters of houses" and the ending pan meaning "place of." Thus, according to Franco (1946: 345), Xalacapan is the "place of clustered houses in the sands." Xalacapan is the largest and oldest village of the entire municipio. Legend has it that the city of Zacapoaxtla was first founded where Xalacapan is now, but it was moved later to its present location. Efforts to identify Xalacapan in the parochial archives have been fruitless. The scribes of 1660 mention a number of places that sound as though they might have been Xalacapan; for example, co-xolipan, and Xaliecapan, but they never wrote the name as we know it today. The first mention of Xalacapan is made in the late 18th century baptismal records. More research should reveal a greater antiquity for Xalacapan, because oral traditions go back farther than the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Population

The 1960 National Census listed a total of 2,029 inhabitants for the village of Xalacapan. The 1966 census reported 2,280. My own census taken in 1969 gave a total of 2,262 persons. The minor differences in these census figures can be explained by waves of temporary migrations into the hot lands during the early fruit season between April and June. Most migrants try to return to Xalacapan for the avocado season, from June until August. Census information reveals a very slow increase in population. Xalacapans are moving out and going to the cities, males in greater numbers than females, as shown by both the 1966 and the 1969 censuses.

My own census reflects this trend in some detail (see Figure 1). The population concentrates in the younger age brackets. In fact, there are 1,267 persons under 21 years of age, who make up 55.9 percent of the total population. Up until this age, males outnumber females. It is significant that the male population begins declining after the age of twenty. In the 21-30 age bracket there are 15 more females than males, and between 31-40 years there are 21 more females than males. This increase in the percentage of female population has occurred in spite of the fact that some women die during pregnancy or delivery, between the ages of 21 and 40. This is reflected in a sharp, absolute decline--from 181 to 111--for that portion of the female population in the 21-30 and the 31-40 brackets. There are always a considerable number of males working outside the Xalacapan, although a given individual might leave Xalacapan only once in his lifetime. Some of these migrants may never come back, once they have had a taste of city life. However, my investigation shows that the decline in population growth rate is not due to migration. Among other factors which prevent a more rapid increase is the high rate of infant mortality and the frequent occurrence of pulmonary diseases that attack both children and adults.

People tend to use Nahuat in the home, even when practically everyone except maybe an older member is fluent in Spanish. My estimate is that in 1968 some 80 percent of the families used still Nahuat in the home, a figure that corresponds with the view of the teachers who had to teach Spanish to practically all the first- and second-grade pupils. In 1974, less than 50 percent of these children are monolinguals. Within Xalacapan the degree of bilingualism decreases as distance to the city of Zacapoaxtla increases.

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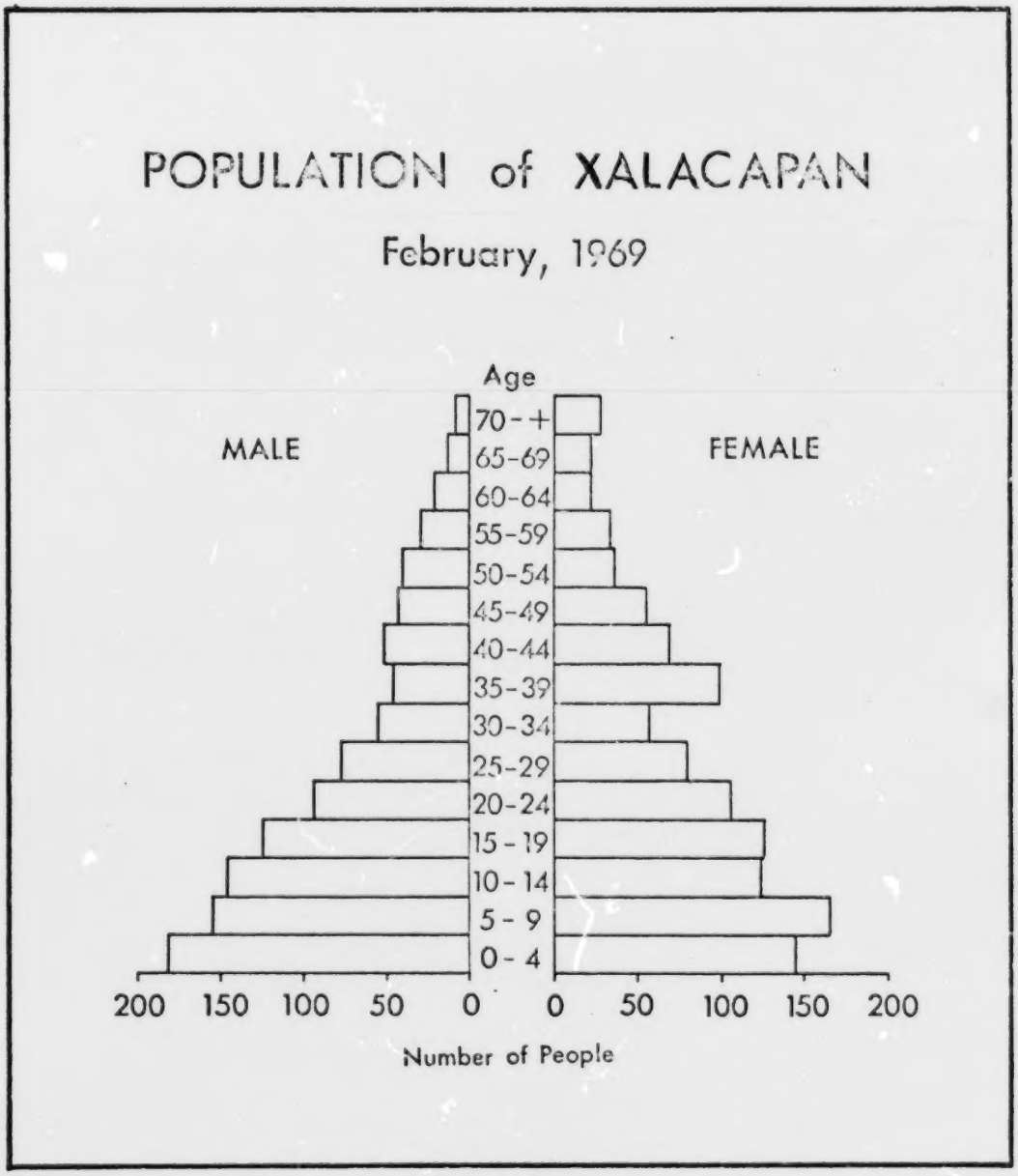

Figure 1

The total population numbered 2,262, of which 1,095 were males and 1,167 females.

Indian males are more frequently bilingual than females. To put it another way, males are more acculturated into the Mexican national way of life than are females, as the difference between monolinguals and bilinguals involves a great deal more than just fluency in Spanish. In fact, cultural differences have polarized the population into opposed groups having different values in such matters as religious beliefs, family structure, marriage regulations, economic organization, eating habits, and dressing patterns. The polarization between monolinguals and bilinguals is also reflected in residence pattern, for the bilinguals often locate their homes between those of the mestizos of Zacapoaxtla and those of the monolinguals of Xalacapan. Bilinguals do in effect represent a transitional stage between the monolingual Indians and the mestizos, who are totally incorporated into the national systems of politics and economics. Bilinguals have become political leaders and economic brokers, hence they are the most important agents of acculturation. The relationship between bilinguals and monolinguals resembles that between mestizos and bilinguals. Both of the dominant groups, the mestizos and the bilinguals, look down upon the dominated group of monolingual Indians as essentially inferior, incapable of ever obtaining economic power for themselves, and suitable for exploitation as a potential source of income (Torres Trueba 1969: 148). On the other hand, the dominated group feels spiritually superior to the others.

Land

Xalacapan has an area of about 400 hectares forming a strip of land five kilometers wide by eight kilometers long, running from north to south. Most of this land is cultivable, but not all of the land within the village boundaries is the property of Xalacapans, nor is it infrequent for a Xalacapan to own land elsewhere. About 200 hectares belong to two mestizos; one of them lives in the city of Zacapoaxtla and the other is a local man, who is also the owner of the refino factory located in Xalacapan territory, but does not constitute a part of the village social unit. Three rich Xalacapan families have managed to acquire almost 150 hectares among them, thus leaving almost no land for the remaining 2,000 Xalacapans. Since large landowners possess 75 percent of the land, the 25 percent left is totally insufficient for the remainder of the population. In fact, if all available land were distributed among the 499 households, each household would obtain 4.5 hectares, which would be barely sufficient for their needs. Many people own no land except for the few square meters upon which they build their homes. With labor, others buy the right to build a house on someone else's land. Land may also be rented from rich landowners on a sharecropping basis. Producing woolen textiles or leather goods, trading, working for others as mozo or laborer, or finally, leaving intermittently in search of better wages, are the only possible alternatives open to a poor or landless Xalacapan. Researchers who have worked in Zacapoaxtla such as Espinola, have noted the limited productivity of the land in that area:

> ...the average productivity of this area--Zacapoaxtla--can be calculated to about one ton per hectare of cultivated land, whereas in the demonstration plots of high productivity of maize that exist in the Valley of Puebla up to eleven tons of maize per hectare have been produced (J. C. Espinola 1965: 93).

Thus, to provide for a family of five, one would need about three or four hectares of land. Given its low productivity, in order to satisfy the 499 Xalacapan families through the equal distribution of land, it would be necessary

to have 1,746.5 hectares, four times more land than is available now; either that, or an increase in the productivity of the land by 75 percent. As it is, Xalacapans derive about 85 percent of their subsistence needs from the land.

Native Industries

There are two main industries, one on leather and the other on wool. The leather industry is not an Indian industry. It was introduced by the Spanish and is now practiced by well-acculturated bilinguals and Spanish monolinguals from other places. There are 22 leather workers employed by four tanneries in Xalacapan. Of the 22, 19 are from Xalacapan. One other tannery is located in the city of Zacapoaxtla. The regional supply of leather products for Zacapoaxtla, Cuetzalan, and Tlatlauqui is produced entirely by Xalacapans and a very few casual outsiders. The hides are sold by weight and are brought in from Huehuetla, Xochitlan, Jonotla, Zapotitlan, Istepec, and Cosquihui. Through a long process recently modernized by the use of chemicals, hides are softened and prepared for the manufacture of sandals, machete cases, straps, belts, and other items. Xalacapan leather workers are considered to be of high economic status and share political and economic control of the village with those economic brokers who run the fruit industry.

The woolen industry, on the other hand, is based on an authenic Indian textile art of prehispanic origin. Approximately 15 households with close to 100 members are engaged in the production of cotones (ponchos), cotorinas (woolen jackets), and fajas (cummerbunds). Until a few years ago, the woolen industry was of great importance to Xalacapans; however, competition with the factory-organized jacket industry of Santa Ana and Puebla has made it almost impossible to make a profit on woolen jackets. The Interamerican Indigenist Institute attempted to revive this industry in 1962, but it failed to obtain a loan from the Mexican banks because it was obvious that the coton makers were ready to use the borrowed money for everything but their coton industry.

The manufacture of fajas or cummerbunds, involves the work of only about 12 women using the prehispanic waist loom. Fajas are sold in the Zacapoaxtla marketplace at prices ranging from 20 to 60 pesos, according to the size and color combinations of the belt. It takes about 15 hours of intensive work for a woman to make one belt.

As a rule, adult males alone are in charge of heavy agricultural work, house construction, leather work, and of occupying the public offices. It is the exclusive domain of adult females to weave fajas, wash clothes, cook, and to assist at childbirth. Both males and females of all ages share some economic activities within the family, as, for example, trading in the marketplace, classifying fruit at home, and packing it for transportation. Either adult males or females may work as tailors, take care of the Church, operate stores, and teach in school. Children regardless of sex join adult males when picking fruit and dancing at religious festivals. They also join with adult females to sing at festivals, and in the daily care of domestic animals.

Family

Most of the families in Xalacapan are monogamous, independent, and nuclear. Departing from this norm are two cases of polygyny and 15 of patrilineal stem families. In the latter cases, a married son, his unmarried children, and his parents live under a single roof with common kitchen and combined budget. (See Table 5.)

Table 5.--Marital Status of Xalacapans

	In consensual union	Married by religious or civil law or both	Widows and widowers	Total
Males	180	235	16	431
Females	192	373	103	668
Totals	372	608	119	1,099

Premarital sexual intercourse is regarded as sinful, but it is weakly sanctioned, and frequent in the case of males. There is neither bride-price nor bride-service, nor any memory of either one having existed in the past. Small bridal gifts are, however, accepted by the bride's family without obligation. The slection of a spouse is increasingly seen as a personal matter in which mutual consent remains the most important factor, though parents' approval is always sought after the choice is made.

There are no special marriage prescriptions, except for the prohibition of marrying a person in the category of -cniuj taken in its extended range (see Table 6). This prohibition has been slightly modified by the Catholic Church, which forbids marriage between first, second, and third degree relatives. These degrees are measured by counting the number of relatives that connect potential spouses to a common trunk. Thus siblings are first degree relatives, first cousins are second degree, and second cousins are third degree relatives. Dispensation is required and often granted for the marriage of third degree relatives, but it is never granted for relatives of the second and first degree. In general, Xalacapans refrain from marriage among relatives and strongly penalize these marriages when they occur by calling the couple "pigs," and refusing to recognize them.

Marital residence is equally virilocal, uxorilocal or neolocal. Virilocality and uxorilocality are often of a temporary type of residence which ultimately resolves into neolocality. As distances are short, a mere change of residence within Xalacapan does not disturb the normal interpersonal relationships of mutual cooperation. Quite often people own small pieces of land scattered throughout the village and consequently there is a lot of coming and going regardless of where they live. About 65 percent of all marriages are village-endogamous with spouses who are randomly selected from within the village. The remaining marriages are with brides from neighboring villages.

There are no unilinear kin groups, and although the rule of descent is bilateral, there is no evidence of any cognatic kin groups other than kindreds, which people distinguish very carefully from other action groups. The strongest and most important social and economic unit is the nuclear family; in a few cases it is the stem family. The terminology for the first ascending generation is of the lineal type 1/ and cousin terminology is of the Eskimo type, which distinguishes between siblings and cousins. Apparently, the use of these two types of kinship

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Table 6 .--Kinship Terms for Xalacapan

Nahuat term, no Spanish	Nahuat and Spanish	Range	
		Normal	Extended
-tajtzin	-papa, -pa	a+m	a+a0m*
-nantzin	-mama, -ma	a+f	a+a0f*
	-tiojtzin,	a+a0m	a+a0f=m
	-tiajtzin	a+a0f	a+a0m=f
-hueyitajtzin, -panhueyi	-hueyipapa -papanhueyi	$a(+a)^{0,1}+a+m$	$a(+a)^{0,1,2}+a0(f=)m$
-hueyinantzin, -manhueyi	-hueyimama, -momanhueyi	$a(+a)^{0,1}+a+f$	$a(+a)^{0,1,2}+a0(m=)f$
-cniuj, cnitzi		a0a	a+a0a-a* $a(+a)^{x}+a0a(-a)^{y}-a$, where x=y=0,1,2.
-hueltiuj, huelti		a0f	a+a0a-f* $a(+a)^{x}+a0a(-a)^{y}-f$, where x=y=0,1,2.
	-primo	$a(+a)^{x}+a0(a-)^{y}a-m$, where x=y=0,1.	$a(+a)^{x}+a0(a-)^{y}a-f=m$ where x=y=0,1.
	-primoicniuj,	a+a0a-a	a+a0a-f
	-primahueltiuj	a+a0a-f (derogatory)	
	-prima	$a(+a)^{x}+a0(a-)^{y}a-f$, where x=y=0,1.	$a(+a)^{x}a0(a-)^{y}a-m=f$ where x=y=0,1.
-pili, -coneuj		a-a	$a(+a)^{x}0(a-)^{y}a-a$, where x=y=0,1.
-suapil		a-f	$a(+a)^{x}0(a-)^{y}a-f$ where x=y=0,1.
-quichpil		a-m	$a(+a)^{x}0(a-)^{y}a-m$
	-sobrino	$a(+a)^{x}0a(-a)^{y}-m$, where x=y=0,1	$a(+a)^{x}0a(-a)^{y}-f=m$, where x=y=0,1.
-xhuitzi		a-a-a	$a(0a)-a(-a)^{0,1,2}-a$
-xhuiyuj		a-a-f	$a(0a)-a(-a)^{0,1,2}-f$
	-cuñado	$a(+a)^{x}0(-a)^{y}f=m$, where x=y=0,1.	
	-cuñada	$a(+a)^{x}0a(-a)^{y}m=f$, where x=y=0,1.	

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Table 6.--Kinship Terms of Xalacapan (cont.)

Nahuat term, no Spanish	Nahuat and Spanish	Range	
		Normal	Extended
-suatzi		m=f	
-tagat		f=m	
-montajtzin		a=a(+a)^{0,1}+m	
-monantzin		m=f(+a)^{0,1}+f	
-monpoy		m=fof=m	
-suamontzi		a-m=f	
-monticauj		a-f=m	

*Obsolete terms.

The notational system followed here is the one proposed by Romney and D'Andrade (1964).

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terminologies is an influence from Spanish, for there are no Nahuat terms for "cousin," "aunt," and "uncle." Besides, the older generation is unanimous in affirming the previous usage of avuncular generational and Hawaiian cousin terminology. This is consistent with the almost forgotten, extended range of the term for "child," pili, "son" -quichpil, "daughter" -suapil, and the lack of Nahuat terms for nephew and niece (see Table 6). The change in social structure indicated here might have been prompted by the steady influence of Catholicism, with its emphasis on monogamy, and national economic pressures, acting as two among the many agents of acculturation (Murdock 1949: 203-206, 209).

Religion

Religious beliefs are manifested daily in many frequent, and at times inconspicuous routine activities; walking, cooking, selling in the market, getting up, going to bed, crossing a corn field, and so forth. The pervasive character of Mesoamerican Indian religion is well known; but, there are special occasions that provide opportunities for major religious practices of great significance: the public festivals in honor of the Patron Saint Michael, All Saints' Day, and Christmas season. Throughout the year, there is a private cult of the ancestors and sacred spirits, which involves either secret ceremonies within the home, or observances in a public place with participation by members of the family only. From an economic point of view, All Saints' Day is the big spending time of the year for the monolinguals. Many of them enter into debt by receiving on credit more merchandise than they can afford to pay. But, the cult of the spirits is at the core of the entire way of life of the Nahuat people. The innumerable stories, jokes, prayers, fears, and activities surrounding the topic of the "spirits" are a manifestation of this central preoccupation. Witchcraft, curing practices, all major events of life, as well as the ordinary daily actions, are accompanied by prayers to the spirits.

Xalacapans are linguistically and culturally dichotomized into two classes, monolinguals and bilinguals. Their entire modes of life are different. Monolinguals, the great majority of villagers, are predominantly subsistence agriculturalists. Bilinguals are primarily merchants. The latter own most of the land and have become the employers of their kinsmen, the monolinguals. Bilinguals have taken over the fruit industry and have become acquainted with the market economy of Mexico City where they take their fruit for sale to wholesalers in the Merced Market.

The solidarity of the community is undoubted in the face of mestizo competition, especially regarding marketplace activities in Zacapoaxtla. All Xalacapans have a sense of unity which is also reinforced in major religious ceremonies, both in their own village and in Zacapoaxtla. From time to time, however, there are violent local disputes between groups of monolinguals and groups of bilinguals. These periodic conflicts divide the entire village over religious, economic, and political matters.

Between 1912 and 1914 a new bell was placed in the tower of the local church without the consent of the monolingual group (then the largest in the village). Rumors began to the effect that anybody who touched the bell would get sick. In fact, two men that had been in charge of ringing the bells had become ill with high fever. Serious attempts were made on the part of the monolinguals to have the bell removed. During those years also, with the occasion of repeated sacking by Maderistas, Carrancistas and other revolutionaries, and due to the tremendous

epidemics that killed one-third of the population in the area, a group of bilinguals was ordered by the municipal authorities to bury the cadavers in a hurry and without the proper rituals. This event resulted in serious confrontations between the monolinguals and bilinguals of Xalacapan.

Xalacapans will always associate the revolutionary groups with the great, national typhus epidemic which swept the country during the second half of 1913. A woman from Xalacapan, now in her eighties, describes the epidemics as follows:

> Well...when the epidemic of fever reached here, lemons cost 50¢ each. One would squeeze lemons and give them to the sick. The fever attacked adults and children. It lasted for about three months. It came around All Saints' Day--Nov. 1st--during the Maderista war and the Zapatista war. So many people died that even the homes would be locked with their dead inside. People were not so much hungry as they were thirsty. The President--that of Xalacapan village--forced people to bury the dead, just like that, without boxes. People said that the new bells had brought the disease. All walked as if they were drunk, and they would go crawling to cook something to eat for themselves. Those who had much maize were asked to share it. Some would eat roots of the mountains, roots of banana trees, whatever they would find around. Others would eat barley with lima beans.

During the twenties and the thirties there are similar confrontations between the regidores (caretakers of the church and saints) and the bilinguals who wanted to give the local priests a strong support in favor of religious practices other than the traditional cult of the saints. Since that time on, monolinguals have made it clear that they alone control all church activities. They are physically in possession of the church buildings and the statutes of the saints. They alone know how to prepare the major cyclical fiestas in honor of their Patron, "San Miguelito" or Saint Michael, for they alone know the traditional dances and prayers. They finance expensive church fiestas, call the priest and pay him to hold Mass and other ceremonies. They alone feel responsible for carrying on the traditional rituals in their original purity, the food offerings to the ancestors, the prayers to the forefathers on ALL SOULS' and ALL SAINTS' DAYS, at Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. Monolinguals practice with greater frequency the ancestral curing ceremonies that culminate with rituals before private altars at home, or at shrines nearby. Whenever any action has been taken by the bilinguals in an attempt to take control of religious functions from the various groups of monolinguals, violent disputes have arisen.

On the other hand, when a group of monolinguals has shown overt hostility to an individual, either from the opposite group, or from another village or town, the bilinguals have organized a forceful defense. To mention just a few recent examples; in 1956 two bilingual women obtained permission from the local priest to prepare new clothes for the Patron Saint Michael, and to have the image retouched. The monolinguals searched the village looking for their Patron Saint, and when they discovered what had happened, they turned their anger against the families of the two women and against the priest. For several months, even after the image was returned to its original place, groups of monolinguals would gather in front of the houses of the two women and insult them repeatedly. They also insulted the priest, intimidated him several times, and shortly afterward, the priest died. The rumors that spread in the village blamed the monolinguals, pointing out that their gunshots at his door had frightened him to death. Year

after year, minor incidents, gossiping, and isolated fist fights between members of the opposite factions revive old resentments. The same group of monolinguals has also expelled a number of casual visitors and researchers from the village; two anthropologists, including the author of this work, two linguists, and a team of investigators from the Interamerican Indigenist Institute. Many less important incidents have also taken place in the last 15 years. In all the above cases, one or another faction of monolinguals, with or without the consent of the local priest, but always against the opinion of the bilinguals, has violently expelled outsiders. At least one death is known to have resulted from these actions; according to the local bilinguals, a casual outsider was cut to pieces, accused of being communist and an evangelista. In the case of the author, the bilingual faction brought him back to the village and guarded him until the monolingual faction began to tolerate his presence. Eventually, monolinguals were to change and go to the other extreme of making him a local hero. To the author's astonishment, a half-drunk monolingual at a good-bye party, unable to stop his tears, apologized for having tried to kill him and gave him ten pesos (80¢), the money he had received to do the job.

Politics

The civil authority in the village of Xalacapan is divided among the following officials: an auxiliary president, not to be confused with the municipal president residing in the city of Zacapoaxtla, and four councilmen. The auxiliary president oversees the other officials, hears complaints, judges and imposes fines, and, most importantly, deals directly with the municipal authorities on matters regarding taxes, orders of imprisonment, and political campaigns. The four councilmen are in charge of village finances, public works, education, and police. Their work is more nominal than real, because the auxiliary president tends to absorb most of the tasks. There is a chief of police, three guards, and 21 watchmen whose role it is to substitute for the policemen when necessary, on a rotational basis, and during special ceremonies when crowds visit Xalacapan. Since all adult males are obliged to work in public projects (road construction or repair, for example), there are eight inspectors of foremen (capitanes de faena) whose main task is to see that the workers show up and do the work. He reports those who refuse to the president. Four men are in charge of taking the census once every three years. Two officials are in charge of recording the facts in case of serious criminal behavior; a judge, and a representative of the municipal criminal lawyer. These individuals issue orders for arrest which are carried out by the chief of police and his guards. Finally, there is an appointed secretary. After the auxiliary president, the most important offices are those of the secretary, who has become a substitute for the president, and of the councilman of finances, because this man collects business taxes. He pays the secretary 240 pesos a month and gives a one-peso tip to the watchmen when they serve as policemen. The councilman officially responsible for public work is also relatively important insofar as he must maintain all road communications in good condition for the fruit market. Thus the foremen report to this official on repairs made or in progress, cooperation of the workers, and on the cost of operations, thereby according to him a measure of local prestige. The official in charge of education, often a prominent bilingual woman in the community, provides the school with the necessary supplies, urges parents to send their children to school, discloses the names of recalcitrant parents to the president (who can fine them or even arrest them for negligence in their children's education), and conducts school festivals. All of the councilmen are elected at the time of presidential elections by those who choose the president. The other authorities

are appointed by the president and his councilmen. Except for the secretary and the chief of police, all of the officials are from Xalacapan, live in Xalacapan, and receive no wages for their work.

The village as a whole depends directly on the municipal authorities, except for small matters such as fights and robbery. When major crime occurs, the municipio immediately takes over the case. Yet, in spite of the overall adoption of the municipio system, there is still a great deal of power in the hands of the elderly, particularly those from prominent landowning families. A president of Xalacapan has to please not only the municipal president, but also his own numerous relatives. If he disregards their advice, he will be granted no support and will be boycotted by his own brothers and sisters. To a lesser extent this is true of the other authorities. As a rule, then, Xalacapans had been indifferent to municipal politics and only superficially concerned with village politics. Few Xalacapans, prior to the last two municipal elections, had ever voted for a municipal president. Their political awareness is a recent phenomenon which began in the village itself. In previous elections for the office of village president, votes were cast, but there were no real elections, for political authorities had always selected a convenient person who was invariably accepted and voted for by the people. (Torres Trueba 1970, 1973.)

III. The School of Xalacapan

In one of the most humid corners of the old building, a bundle of poorly wrapped and half-destroyed archives was, after much effort, made available for research. Three months of trying to make sense of the very disorganized and fragmentary information were rewarded with insights about the entire village and municipio. The oldest document, dated January 15, 1883, read:

> Citizen Lauro Luna, political chief of the District of Zacapoaxtla, testifies that citizen Ramon Gutierrez was made responsible by this office for the construction of the local children's school in the bario of Xalacapan order to be built by the undersigned and thanks to the efforts of the judges of peace that worked during those years of 1880, 1881 and 1882 was terminated happily the building which at all times will honor the memory of those who devoted their energy to such a noble enterprise. And for the satisfaction of citizen Gutierrez and that of the undersigned I extend the present /document/ in Zacapoaxtla on the 15th of January of 1883. Lauro Luna /signature/.

The First Teacher and First Years

The first building was a modest and bare adobe room of 48 x 19.5 ft. proudly showing the black letters "escuela Allende de Xalacapan," named after the Independence hero, Ignacio Allende. The barrio of Xalacapan had then a very small population juding from the 1890 survey of school age children totalling 94 children, of which 78 were registered in the school. The only teacher and first director of the school was Jose Maria Perez. He was in charge of five groups, three first grade and two second grade. His salary consisted of voluntary

contributions from the villagers. All the school had was a clock, a few benches, no blackboard, no books, ink or any other materials. When Francisco Betancourt, the inspector of education (then called inspector pedagogico) came to pay his first official visit to Escuela Allende in 1891, he tested all children, interviewed their parents, checked the school facilities and equipment and found everything satisfactory in spite of the obvious material limitations of the new school. Evidently the villagers felt quite happy with their new teacher.

Most early documents consist of reports from the school director to the political chief of Zacapoaxtla, lists of students, and routine letters. There are no documents between 1901 and 1920. In 1923 for the first time the Office of Indian Culture (Direccion de Cultura Indigena) is mentioned. The sheer existence of such organization suggests that the concerns of the National Indigenist Institute founded in the 1940s had important precedents 20 years earlier. We do not know what happened in the school between 1901 and 1923, although that was probably an inactive period. It must have continued with a single teacher for some time until the chaotic years of revolution and epidemics. Older persons do remember the school being in existence during those first two decades of the 20th century, but they hardly remember anything else.

New Building and New Problems

The year of 1924 was important for the Xalacapan School. Its name was changed to Escuela Rural Municipal de Xalacapan. A new building was constructed, and a large piece of land was granted to the school, 11,855 sq. mts. The benefactors, Miguel and Maria Lucas, are believed to have been members of the small group of aristocratic landowners living in Zacapoaxtla city. This construction is still in use today with some added classrooms. But 15 years later, this name was changed to Escuela Rural Sargento Mariano Xilot after one of the heroes of the war against the French, a soldier native of Xalacapan who fought in 1862 with the bravest battallion, El Batallon Zacapoaxtleco.

There were important structural changes in the educational organization of Mexico that reached Zacapoaxtla during this period. After 1927 the salary of teachers was paid by municipal representatives of the federally controlled Department of Education. Prior to this year, male and female pupils were placed in separate groups. This practice was thus abandoned. The state of Puebla was divided into school districts, and systematic visits from inspectors brought about much needed revision of curriculum and administrative policies.

It is not clear why between 1926 and 1934 the school's attendance decreased so dramatically in Xalacapan. There were frequent complaints on the part of the school director to the municipal president and the village auxiliary president. Professor Guadalupe Martinez received from don Eduardo Limon Molina, the supreme municipal authority, letters pressuring village authorities to punish local authorities who did not support the school and parents who did not send their children to school. Veiled somehow there is an implicit complaint against the group of conservative Catholics. In 1935, Professor Martinze referred to the "rumors that the socialist school is immoral," when all it intends is to "redeem the peasantry." Martinez did obtain some support. The enrollment that had started very low with 30 children, 21 in first grade, 14 boys and 7 girls, and 9 boys in second grade, went up to 80 with 40 percent girls. Federal control insisted on making school attendance mandatory for girls. Martinez was very proud

to report, along with the increased attendance, a budget of 11 pesos, a few rabbits and some chicken, which would eventually be used to buy school materials.

Porfirio Cordero

The year of 1935 brought new faces and much firmer leadership to Zacapoaxtlan educational institutions. The entire mission of the teacher and the school was redefined under the wise and tough leadership of don Porfirio Cordero, inspector of the 6th School District. This district included all the schools of the municipios of Zacapoaxtla, Xochitlan, Cuetzalan, and Nauzontla. Cordero searched for his teachers, trained them, and made them work "like mules," as some old teachers say. Porfirio Cordero was the greatest inspiration of the rural teacher in Zacapoaxtla during the following 20 years. The political tempo of the country viewed the socialism of the Cardenas type as a possible solution to the multiple socioeconomic problems of the peasantry. Cordero sincerely believed that Mexico had to be drastically changed through the socialist school. The struggle between the rural teachers of the Sierra of Puebla and the Catholic aristocracy who opposed them was bloody and hurt the peasantry most. According to oral reports from the oldest teachers in the municipio, individuals paid by the rich Catholics would persecute teachers and abuse them. Apparently the persecutors, who were organized in bands and received the collective name of "Cristeros," would go from village to village killing or mutilating teachers. They would cut one of the teacher's ears, destroy his property and chase him out of the village. Insepector Cordero and two other teachers, Miguel Mendez and Anselmo Hernandez, well armed and ready, visited the barrios and villages and organized the resistance where the Cristeros had passed. They restored the teachers' and villagers' self-confidence after several years of painful efforts.

During this period the school documents show the use of terms of address common to the socialist party, such as "comrad." Cordero asked for the teachers' and pupils' cooperation in the national struggle against the European and American Oil companies. The following is a letter from inspector Cordero to all the federal teachers of the Sixth School District.

> You do not ignore the general crisis of our country created by the deeply patriotic attitude of the citizen General Lazaro Cardenas, President of the Republic, in front of the great foreign trusts, that have monopolized the wealth of our national petroleum. The Mexican Government has a debt that we all Mexicans must pay, because it is a matter of nothing else than maintaining firm the greatest step taken towards the economic liberation of our country. This office suggests to you that immediately you form children's and adults' committees for our economic redemption. You may establish a minimum cooperation of one cent a week, or the amount you consider appropriate, making concrete and clear lists of those who contribute by sending funds to this office, responsible for sending them through proper channels to the National Committee for Economic Redemption. April 18, 1938. Porfirio Cordero /signed/.

In the late thirties and early forties, the major crises of Zacapoaxtla's educational institutions were over. The persecution of the "socialist school" had passed, Cordero's trainees had taken over the direction of the schools, several centros de castellanizacion (places where monolingual Indians could learn Spanish) had been organized, the school had become the center for community activities, and the time was ripe for the technical and academic restructuring of the rural schools in the Sierra Norte of Puebla. The merit system for salary increases was also established. In order of importance, I will list some of the criteria to grant a salary increase to the rural teacher. Although these criteria were written in 1944, during Cordero's office, they still represent valid criteria, although the order might have changed slightly:

1. Improving working conditions and salaries of workers.

2. Organizing compact settlement, where the population was scattered.

3. Constructing a school, the teacher's house, or a marketplace.

4. Providing the villagers with drinking water, or with adequate instruments to develop native industries.

5. Improving the reading and speaking ability in Spanish of children, especially if this is done through "cuentos socialistas" (stories of socialist character).

6. Improving the health and hygiene in the families.

7. Teaching adults how to fill out contracts and other important documents.

From the previous merit criteria, it is rather obvious that the ideal teacher of the mid 1940's had to be a person totally devoted to the service of the community and if possible a socialist.

The tough, persistent and demanding educational leader of the 1930's, 40's, and 50's, Porfirio Cordero, was undoubtedly the inspiration and model for many teachers. Thus there is some continuity during these three decades, although each of them had its own peculiarities. The 1940's comes to the Sierra Norte of Puebla with a major thrust on adult education, with a new mission, adult literacy. This reflects the impact of the National Campaign of Alfabetization.

In addition to regular daily duties of the morning school, rural teachers had the obligation of teaching evening classes for adults at no extra pay first, though later they were modestly compensated. It was a strange coincidence that during this time Xalacapan had been partially electrified if only for three or four years. Intensive surveys were conducted in the village to assess the number of school children, the number of illiterate adults, and the number of people attending either regular or adult classes. The population of Xalacapan must have been around 1500. There were 341 school children between the ages of six and 14, but only 55 of them (16.1 percent) were literate. Of the 824 people between 15 and 45 years of age, 252 (30.5 percent) were literate. The literacy level for all villagers was 26 percent and was twice as high for males as for females.

Inspector Cordero was determined to change the future of the Sierra of Zacapoaxtla. He deeply and sincerely believed in the power of the teachers as

agents of social change. Within this conviction, Cordero demanded a great deal from his teachers. He insisted that the teachers should:

1. Obtain full registration of children of school age.
2. Ask punctuality.
3. Follow the regulations of the Ministry of Education.
4. Encourage agricultural production.
5. Encourage the community to organize Education Committees which give complete support to the school.
6. Plan their goals carefully and periodically check goal achievement.
7. Follow the school calendar.
8. Have regular teaching staff meetings.
9. Present accurate annual reports.
10. Present plans of lessons prepared during the year.
11. Outline their teaching methods, especially for the teaching of writing and reading to other than Spanish speakers.
12. Gather teaching materials locally relevant.
13. Keep accurate records of pupil classification (correct name, age, sex, grade level, etc.) and class attendance.
14. Demand neat appearance from pupils.
15. Watch over the health of children and their families.
16. Survey the village's population statistics (marriages, births, deaths, etc.) once a year.

Cordero's insistence on accountability and planning transformed rural schools from a tolerated appendix in the village to the very social center of the community. The importance of the school was evident during the celebrations of civil festivities under the direction of the teachers. These festivities dramatized the incorporation of the rural school into the nation's cultural heritage. There were "patriotic weeks" to commemorate important historical events and thus socialize children and sensitize them to the political reality of Mexico. Here are some of the major festivities of the school calendar in 1945:

Feb. 5 Anniversary of the new Constitution of 1917 that stressed land reform.

22 Death of Francisco I. Madero, initiator of the 1910 Revolution.

24 Day of the National Flag. Day of the Tree.

March 21 Birth of Benito Juarez, the first Indian President and land reformist. Day of the Indian Child.

April 2 Anniversary of the Break of the Siege of Puebla (1862) that had been taken by the French.

14 Panamerican Day

27 Day of the Soldier

30 Day of the Child

May 1 Labor Day

10 Mother's Day

15 Fall of Queretaro and the End of Maximiliano's Empire

July 18 Anniversary of Benito Juarez's Death

30 Anniversary of Miguel Hidalgo's Death, the "Father of the Independence"

Aug.13 Fall of Tenochtitlan, the Aztec Capital in 1521.

Sept.13 "Ninos Heroes de Chapultepec" in commemoration of youth of the Chapultepec Military Academy who, wrapped in the Mexican Flag, jumped from the Castle of Chapultepec in order not to fall in the hands of the American Army that had invaded Mexico in 1914.

16 The start of Mexican Independence in 1810

27 The Consumation of the Independence in 1821

Oct.12 La Raza Day

Nov.20 Anniversary of the Mexican Revolution

One may wonder, if with so many civil celebrations, there was any time left for instruction. In fact, almost none of the above festivities was supposed to cut instruction time but rather was to be used as the focus of instruction and to stimulate progress and solidarity. There were two semesters with a total of 195 instruction days, without counting, of course, Wednesdays, market day, when attendance is traditionally very low (15-20 percent). Children are indeed indispensable for their parents on that day in order to carry the normal economic activities.

Cordero remained in office from 1935 to 1952 when he was replaced by don Miguel Aguilar y Daza. Old, tired, and perhaps disappointed, he went to Puebla City, but not before witnessing the beginnings of the new political upheavals that would come upon his teachers.

Teachers Union

The mid 1950's brought numerous legitimate claims from the teachers for a fair salary and the provision of instructional materials. Teachers' unionization and strikes significantly increased their political role in the Sierra Norte of Puebla. There was greater mobility of the educational staff with the Municipio of Zacapoaxtla and outside. Under the leadership of don Angel Gonzales (to be discussed in following chapters) they resisted the political monopoly of the aristocratic elite of landowners and merchants living in Zacapoaxtla City.

When voluntary financial support for the rural teachers was substituted by a fixed salary paid by the Federal Government, salary increases on the basis of merit

proved to be unfair and insufficient to compensate teachers for their difficult work. Teachers' salaries have always been low (see Table 7), but in 1939 a teacher with several years of experience was making only 960 pesos a year. Today that same teacher after working for 40 years earns 22,368 pesos (less than $1,800 per year) which is one of the highest salaries in the area.

Table 7.--Average Salaries of Teachers in the School of Xalacapan from 1940 to 1973

Year	Amount in pesos	Amount in dollars (12.50/1)
1940	1,000	80.00
1950	3,432	274.80
1960	8,712	696.96
1965	13,368	1,069.44
1970	20,144	1,611.52
1973	22,368	1,789.44

Source: Xalacapan School Records.

Looking at the attendance records for the last 40 years, one can observe the sharp drops in 1935, 1950, 1955, 1958, 1962, and 1968. Attendance oscillations may reflect changes in the teaching staff of the school. While a few teachers stay in a village school for as many as six or even eight years, the intent is always to move out and move up. There is certain stability in the number of teachers expected to teach at a given school. Xalacapan, for example, increased its teaching personnel very gradually. Up to 1939 (and possibly as late as the early 1940's) there was only one teacher with 80 or 90 pupils. In 1945 there were three teachers with 35 pupils per teacher. In 1948 the total number of teachers was four, with a ratio of 50-60 pupils per teacher. New teachers were added in 1953, 1959, 1964, and 1969. In 1973 there were nine teachers with a ratio of 35-45 pupils per teacher. The reason for these low ratios is that in the last two years of primary education (fifth and sixth grades) dropouts increase a great deal. Only about one-third of those enrolled in first grade ever get to the fifth and sixth grades. The merit system, both for the allocation of teaching jobs and for salary increases, was combined with a tradition of privileges based on seniority and on underground political manipulations. Whatever the operational arrangement of the informal and formal systems of job allocation may be, it does in fact penalize the small village schools and favor the larger towns which offer the comfort and economic incentives lacking in the sparsely populated and marginal peasant areas. Thus the 1960's were characterized by greater stratification of the teaching personnel in the municipio, by a ranking of the schools according to their accessibility from larger towns (e.g., Cuetzalan and Zacapoaxtla), and by the increased political involvement on the part of the teachers in order to secure their positions. There was also a great deal of evaluation of teachers' performance, specifically with regard to program implementation. This is understandable because of the emphasis on program development on

the part of those teachers aspiring to important federal and state political positions.

Children's attendance at school does not only reflect the instability of the teaching personnel but also the degree of support given by the local authorities to the teachers, or, if you wish, the congeniality of the relationships between teachers and village authorities. From the nine teachers that Xalacapan has today, four are new in the village, two have been there for seven years, and the rest have not been there for more than two or three years (see Table 8 next page).

Xalacapan School in 1973

There are 378 children divided into nine groups (with a single teacher for each group). But since the demand for first and second grades is pressing, there are three first-grade classes, A, B, and C, and two second-grade classes, A and B. Grades third through sixth have a single group each. About 80 percent of the children are bilingual in Spanish and Nahuat after third grade. First and second grades have 50 percent monolinguals in Nahuat. The school building still in use today consists of the section built between 1924-1927 when the school director was Guadalupe Martinez and the four new classrooms added since 1965. The school sits in the middle of family dwellings, corn fields, and the town plaza. Across the street from the plaza is the town store, church, and the office of the village president and rigidores. There are ten classrooms, one for each group, and one used as an office. The official title of the school reads "Escuela Primaria Federal Sgto. Mariano Xilot." Above the doorway of each classroom hangs a sign with the name of a national hero or an outstanding educator such as Benito Juarez, or Maestro Miguel Martinez. Attendance is satisfactory (see Table 9).

Table 9.--Average Attendance by Sex and Grade Level, Xalacapan, 1973

	Grades						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Male	74	54	30	22	14	14	208
Female	74	30	20	15	17	14	170
Total	148	84	50	37	31	28	378

Source: Xalacapan School Records.

At nine o'clock each school day the bell rings for the students to go to their formation places on the basketball court. The director and teachers make announcements or give special instructions to the groups. This takes from five to ten minutes. Then children go to their classrooms and normally stay there until mid-noon, when they take a break for a short snack and go for their physical education class. At 12:30 p.m. the students go back to their classes where they stay until dismissal time at 2:00 p.m. Children seem to love school. They are

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Table 8.--Characteristics of Teachers and of Their School Work, 1972-73

Name	Age	Sex	Place of origin	Residence		Years of teaching	Years in Xalacapan	Group and level	Number of pupils	Years teaching same level	12 mos., monthly salary in pesos
Antonio Lopez Romero (Principal)	38*	M	Zacapoaxtla	Zacapoaxtla	Inst. Fed. de Capacitacion del Magisterio	17	7	6th	28	8	1,860
Anselmo Hernandez Pena	62*	M	Xalacapan	Zacapoaxtla	Escuela Normal de Matamoros	42	2	1B	50	11	2,310
Maria G. Martinez de Hernandez (wife of previous teacher)	60*	F	Zacapoaxtla	Zacapoaxtla	Inst. Fed. de Capacitacion Magisterio	26	2	2B	40	12	1,417
Pablo Flores Flores	30*	M	Zacapoaxtla	Zacapoaxtla	Escuela Normal de Zaragoza	10	7	2A	44	2*	1,746
Adelina Sanchez Camacho	29*	F	San Andres	Zacapoaxtla	Escuela Normal de Tetela	6	1	1A	49	3*	1,200*
Obed Castaneda Cruz	25*	M	Zacapoaxtla	Zacapoaxtla	Normal Superior de Puebla	6	1	1C	49	2*	1,350*
Margarita Vazquez Reyes	28*	M	Cuetzalan	Cuetzalan	--	8	3	4th	37	2*	1,710
Hilda Valerio de Lopez (wife of Principal)	27	F	Xalacapan	Zacapoaxtla	(Only Second. School of Zac.)	5	1	3rd	50	1	900*
Sual Carcamo Lobato	28	M	Zacapoaxtla	Zacapoaxtla	Escuela Normal de Zaragoza	5	1	5th	31	1*	1,300*

*Estimated.

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very proud of their school and do not seem to notice the missing row of windows on some classrooms, or the lack of heating facilities, drinking water, and restrooms, or the poor lighting from the dangling cord with a single 40-watt bulb in the center of the classroom.

At first glance one can see three rows of double desks in the classroom. Teachers separate children into three different categories according to their performance. When examined orally by the teacher, those children that do best go to or stay in the front rows. In the back corner of the room stand three brooms, a bucket, cans and mop, ready for the children to use before class dismissal at the end of the day. Class decoration varies but in general is scanty and sober. There is a calendar behind the teacher's chair and table. At times instead of a blackboard the wall is painted black. In the middle of the wall there is a picture of Hidalgo, or Morelos, or another hero of the Independence. The surrounding trees and distant sky can be seen from the inside.

Following the instructions from the Department of Education, most teachers stress hygiene, protection of personal health and good nutrition. A student is asked to perform a careful inspection of the rest of the class to see how clean their feet, hands, face and hair are. Some of the suggestions made in class by the teachers might seem too idealistic; e.g., to take a bath every day in village where no one has indoor facilities (water has just begun to be brought into the village) and where it may get cold during the night at 8,000 feet, even during the summer. The same comment can be made about the teachers' talks on nutrition. The advice taken from the books can be totally artificial and impractical for the Xalacapans, e.g., recommendations to eat meat and drink milk, although both products are scarce and the latter not commonly used by the monolingual Indians. Many of the new programs mean to reinforce national history, literacy and math competence, and they are good indeed. The problem, however, is that these programs are addressed to another type of student, not certainly the isolated Nahuat-speaking Zacapoaxtlan. Many of the children fail because of this problem of neglect of and lack of respect for their language and culture. During the first grade in 1973, 62 out of 148 had to repeat the year. In second grade, 23 out of 84 were retained. In third, nine out of 50 repeated (not counting students who repeated the same year once, or even twice). The parents of monolingual children in Nahuat are usually Nahuat speakers too and remain totally removed from the mainstream of the school activities, except perhaps to be scolded if their child misbehaves. Books are very scarce and carefully kept in the school. A child is not allowed to take his books home until the end of the year, when he usually does not need them any more. If a child lost his or her book during the year, and no book could be found to replace it, the child would suffer a great deal more than if he is deprived from the use of books at home. Real interest in the books does not seem to develop until third or fourth grades. In fact, often second- and third-grade children might vocalize clearly and read well but not understand Spanish well enough to know what they are reading. Teachers have no access to any audio-visual aids, but they are very creative in using the natural surroundings to improvise their lectures and clarify concepts.

In conclusion, regardless of all these problems and limitations, the rural teachers have done an outstanding work with the highest degree of personal commitment and sacrifice. The teachers have been the most adequate acculturation models and most effective agents of change in the Sierra Norte of Puebla. They have incorporated the monolingual Indians into the national culture, both by

teaching a new language to the Nahuat speakers and by defending the interests and persons of the Indians themselves. The most important contribution of the teachers has probably been to increase the number of bilingual Indians and to facilitate the political education of bilingual Indians.

Footnotes

1. The 63 municipios of the Sierra Norte are further divided into 1,018 smaller communities which the national census terms localidades. These vary in rank from ejido and barrio to village and city. The census specifies that all communities of 2,500 and under are to be considered rural, while all those over 2,500 are classified as urban. A rural community of more than 1,000 is termed barrio, whereas the rank of pueblo (village) is given to communities having populations between 2,500 and 3,500. Anything greater becomes a city.

2. In the lineal type of kinship terminology, for the first ascending generation the criterion of collaterality is applied while the criterion of bifurcation is ignored, thus obtaining four terms: one for father, one for mother, one for father's sister and mother's sister and finally one for father's brother and mother's brother.

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